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Brussels, 30 January 1991

**Welcoming message from Frans ANDRIESSEN,
Vice-President of the Commission of the European Communities,
to participants in the meeting of the Group of Twenty Four.**

Brussels, 30 January 1991.

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On behalf of the Commission, I extend a warm welcome to all participants in this meeting which is of exceptional importance. For the first time, all the countries of central and eastern Europe which have made firm reform commitments are gathered together with the Twenty Four industrialised countries whose aid is coordinated by the Commission and with representatives of the international financial institutions. This provides a timely opportunity to review priorities for assistance, especially in such areas as energy and finance.

There can be no question of allowing external shocks or uncertainties to jeopardise prospects for reform in central and eastern Europe. Countries which have been courageous enough to introduce currency convertibility, privatisation and other bold reforms in a highly uncertain international climate deserve the full support of the Community and of all the industrialised countries.

Having overthrown totalitarian régimes, our partners in central and eastern Europe are making determined efforts to play a full part in Europe and in the world, in some cases showing their solidarity with the international community through practical forms of support during the present crisis. It is, therefore, particularly gratifying that the Twenty Four and other countries have given clear signals of their willingness to help overcome financial problems stemming in part from the situation in the Gulf.

Total commitments from the Twenty Four now stand at 27.5 billion ECU, US\$ 38 billion. This is providing a major boost to the efforts of our partners whose peoples are themselves shouldering the major burden of reform. I am confident that the Twenty Four will today reaffirm their own commitment to supporting the reform process and that this will help maintain the momentum of economic reconstruction in central and eastern Europe.

